## **The Nation**

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## Peace activists call for cut in defence budgets

Demand people-centred policies to eradicate poverty from Pakistan, India: Peace activists plant 'Tree of Hope'

OUR STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD - Underlining the need to cut defence spending to increase stability in neigh-Pakistan, the members of the Indian peace delegation and representatives of various civil society organisations agreed to development to bring positive change in the lives of people.

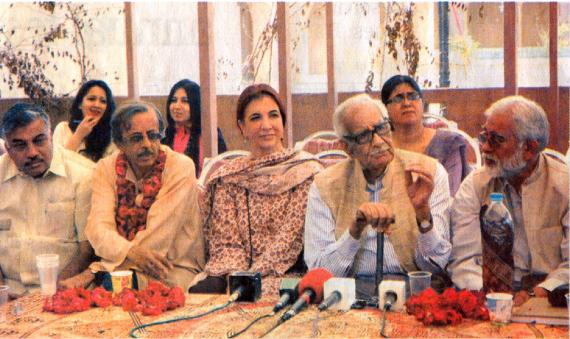
In a statement, they also said, "The de-nuclearisation is a must in the region since three generation's development prospects have been destroyed with the persistence of status quo adding and Pakistan is a must. that we should not spoil the future of our fourth generation."

Insani Hagoog Itihad, a network of civil society organisations, Monday hosted a reception in the honour of Indian peace delegation comprising noted journalist Kuldip Navar, film director Mahesh Bhatt, leading both countries, they also agreed economist and parliamentarian Dr Bhalchandra Mungekar, sation among masses and even editor of a leading Indian daily Urdu newspaper Shahid Sid-

diqui, journalist Jatin Desai, Mazher Hussain, Kamla Bhasin, Seema Mustafa, Haris Kidwai, Ramesh Yadev and Sanjay Nahar. Indian peace delegation is bouring countries, India and currently visiting Pakistan with the objective of giving impetus to the peace-process between the two countries.

They were of the view that in divert resources for social sector order to end poverty, hunger, violence against women and marginalized sections, exploitation of workers, especially home-based women workers in India and Pakistan, and in fact. in all the SAARC countries, realisation of peace between India

> Before talking to media and representative of civil society organisations, the delegation planted sapling in arts and craft village and named it as "Tree of Hope." The delegation members reiterated that although there were anti-peace forces in that there was a growing realisuch as BJP that stability in South Asian region's interest. stability, have significantly de- and extremes," said Janin Desai, Secretary of Pakistan-India Peo-



ISLAMABAD: Kaldip Nayyar, the head of Indian peace delegation, addressing a press conference at Pothohari Art & Craft Village on Monday.-Staff photo by Syed Mehdi

among the fanatic forces in India both neighbouring countries is in "We, the forces of peace and feated the forces of fanaticism a journalist and National Joint

Democracy, and bureau mem- mitments with regard to social ber of South Asians for Human sector allocations especially in Rights. Chaudhry Manzoor, education and health. MNA (PPP), supported the idea that visa condition among SAARC countries should be of both countries have ruined the abolished. Karamat Hussain peace prospects and both the from PILER said that the member of SAARC have already ratified a convention in 1987 which called for "suppression of terrorism" among the SAARC parties' in both countries purcountries.

But so far no mechanism has been developed for implementation of the convention, he political parties to pursue a added. The delegation and the host civil society organisations demanded that the SAARC people should cooperate and members must create a mechanism for the convention to end terrorism in the region. They also urged the SAARC countries to make the convention effective. They said that all SAARC countries should give MFN status to each other, which is obligatory under WTO regime.

human principles should be re-

ple's Forum for Peace and countries should fulfil their com-

They lamented that military and intelligence establishments countries have been wasting their numerous resources on defence and security expenditures. They said that political sued their political agenda in the process but people's pressure can help positively engage the peace and people-centred agenda. Pro-people and pro-stability strengthen each other in both countries to help boost cooperation and friendship should prevail between these two countries to ensure people's real freedom from hunger, poverty, exploitation, and discrimination.

The pro-peace forces should make the masses aware, mo-They demanded that basic bilise them and provide them different platforms to raise their alised and practiced and both voices of friendship and peace.